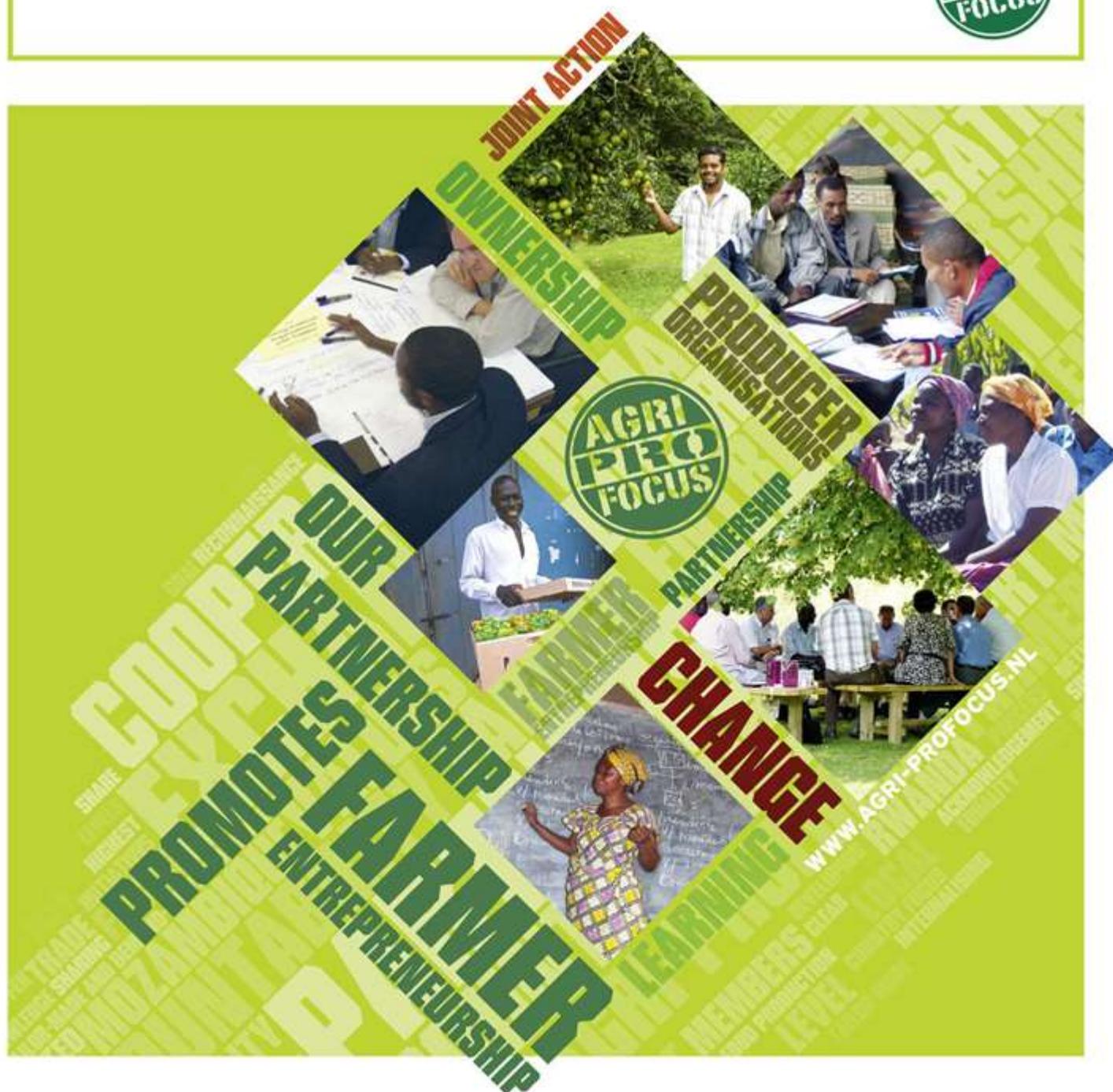


AGRI-HUB ETHIOPIA

PROGRESS REPORT JAN- MAY 2014

Steering committee

June 6, 2014



1. Introduction

In 2013 the Agri-Hub started a new phase, with setting up *Working Groups* and organising the *Learning Agenda* of the Food Security and Rural Entrepreneurship Fund sponsored by the RNE and implemented by ICCO on behalf of the Agri-Hub. In 2014 these priorities were continued with a growing number of (diverse) activities.

The staffing of the Hub has changed in the period under review. The new Linking and Learning that joined the Steering Committee on 28 February resigned (for personal reasons) after 3 weeks and never came back. Fortunately another experienced staff member was found quickly, Mrs. Jelleke de Nooij. But due to previous commitments she could only work till the end of April, before taking holidays to half June. From June onwards she will work 4 days/week as Linking and Learning Officer.

In March Amarech Haile left the Hub (she went to live in Ziway). She was replaced by Gizaw Legesse who is responsible for the PR and the Website (part-time). Kebede Dhuga took over her role in organising Finance Fairs (also part-time).

2. Agri-Hub activities in Jan. – May 2014

a. Network development and coordination

At the start of 2014 Agri-Hub had 706 individual members and 59 Organizations. As of end of May, this had grown respectively to 834 (18% growth) and 72 (20% growth). The new *individual* members include staff of:

- 35 NGOs
- 29 Companies
- 21 Knowledge Institutes
- 19 Government staff
- 7 Producer Organization
- 2 Networks
- 15 Others

Among the new members only 15 are female. The new *organizational* members include 6 Companies, 4 NGOs and 2 Capacity Builders.

Due to a new PR officer for the online platform, communication intensified. In the last five months 77 news items were posted, ranging from Calls for Proposals, general information, Agri-Hub activity reports, FSRE Fund process to factsheets and Monthly newsletters. All Agri-Hub events were posted while the events were taking place or immediately after.

Seven forums were initiated. On the 'market place' a range of products were covered: poultry, silk, onions, potatoes but although 133 members viewed these forums and most of the initial ideas were detailed, no replies or follow up discussions developed. It is hard to see how this can be improved. One option is to send mail-alerts to all members for each post, but this can easily put off people as well.

Four Monthly Newsletters were published in the past five months; this included interviews with an ex-hub colleague, an entrepreneur and the CASCAPE National Coordinator. (You can see the newsletters [here](#).) In order to avoid the broadcast e-mail to end up in spam folders, they were made with an irregular time intervals. It also includes some issues that may seduce members to visit the Hub.

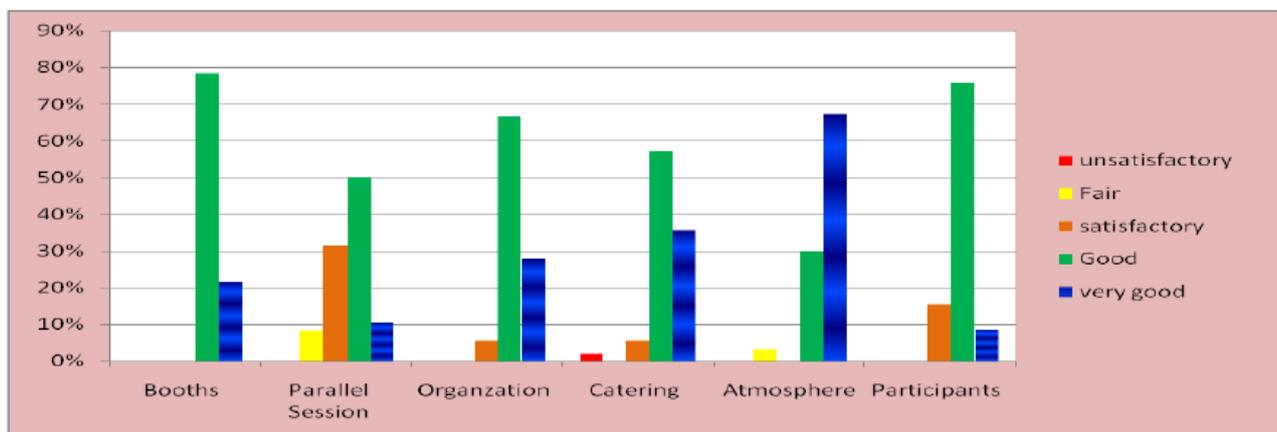
Over the last five months 7,307 visitors came to the Agri-Hub Ethiopia website. This is a 10% increase over the 2013 data. The visitors get more diverse; the number of *unique* visitors was 1,013 per month, 16% above the 2013 data. The average visit duration is 4:14 and the page-views per visit was 3.20; similar to last year.

b. Business and partnership brokering

Finance Fairs offer the best opportunities for local partnering. On 2 April the fifth Fair was organised in collaboration with Hawassa University and ISSD. Seventeen organizations participated: Financial Institutions (Banks), Insurance Companies, MFIs and Capacity Builders of POs and 350 farmers attended. The two days Fair encompassed a market place where financial institutions and POs displayed their products and services. Parallel, 5 papers on the challenges and importance of access to finance were presented and participants acquired valuable lessons through detailed discussions. On the second day a field visit was organised to Kayo Seed Producers Cooperative in Borchha District to share experience from the successful relation between the Coop and CBO. At the end of the event a survey was held among 26 visitors. The main results are that:

- 15% of the participants were women
- 4 people out of the 26 arranged a loan or opened a bank account
- 13 of the 26 said they got useful information on agricultural finance
- 88% of the participants were satisfied with the event.

All participation organisations evaluated the event as well: 93% was satisfied with the event; for 20% it was even above expectations. The graph gives a quick overview of the results on different aspects. It shows a high overall level of satisfaction.



Obviously there is still the desire and need to improve and expand the event. Six respondents (of the 26) would like more agricultural technology and five said they were informed poorly or lately about the event. This will be our focus for the next event in Debre Zeit (organised with OSE and ISSD). More details (including a full evaluation report) can be found on the website. <http://apf-ethiopia.ning.com/events/agri-business-finance-fair-1st-and-2nd-of-march-at-hawassa-1>

Direct matching of businesses as a result of a systematic search effort has not yet taken place. One difficulty is to determine what the niche of the AgriHub is vis-à-vis other organisations. The Dutch embassy supports Dutch entrepreneurs and set up the Agro-Business Support Facility (ABSF) in the Chamber of Commerce for this. Also the Ethio-Netherlands Business Association (ENLBA) can support Dutch entrepreneurs. The Hub drafted a flyer to clarify the mandate of the different organisations to potential clients; ABSF took the responsibility to finalise it. It is still working on it. At the same time Hub staff addressed requests for (business) linkages. Annex I gives an overview of 23 cases.

On 30 April a matchmaking event was organised with 40 participants (4 female), in the context of the G4AW initiative of DGIS and NSO (Netherlands Space Organisation). The event was co-organised with the RNE, NSO and IICD. The aim was to share information and to form consortia to apply for the next round of funding from G4AW. Participants ranged from Dutch owned private agribusinesses, Ethiopian businesses, Farmer's Cooperative Unions, Local and International NGOs, Financial Institutions, Insurance Companies, FAO, ILRI, WFP and the DG extension of the Ministry of Agriculture. First the benefits of satellite data for agriculture and food security were discussed. Next the participants grouped themselves around 3 common objectives:

1. Insurance, DRRM and Early warning systems: pests, diseases, drought, flood, etc.
2. Farm management: weather, crop, livestock, soil, rain, resources etc.;
3. Market Information: Input – output.

c. Innovation communities and working groups

The progress with thematic working groups has been limited due to staffing problems (see introduction). Yet, still four WGs continued to function well: gender, A-TVET, RBDS and Cooperative Development.

Gender in value chain

Following a 3-day training Gender in Value Chains in Oct. 2013, the Gender in Value Chains coaching support track was launched: 11 organisations paid the own contribution to join: FC, Oxfam Canada, CDI, ADAA, HUNDEE, ERSHA, Eshete MFI, DEC, GOAL Ethiopia, TGT and CASCAPE. The activities undertaken are:

- Organizations selected their respective value chain to engage in
- All formulated coaching objectives/questions for this case.
- The consultant (Theodros Hailemariam) provided on job coaching through physical and distant advice on identified learning questions. A minimum of 3 rounds of meetings and discussions and 3-5 communications though telephone, mail etc. was made. Based on the support participating organizations accomplished the following:
 - Gender sensitive value chain mapping using the tools in the kit
 - Some organizations assigned full time expert
 - Gender based Cost and Benefits analysis over VC interventions
 - Conducted Gender Sensitive Value Chain training for program staff and partner organizations at field office level.
 - Conducted half day practical field visit to the selected VC product and application of the toolkits in practice.
 - Sharing and aware raising with senior staff about gender in VCs
 - Conducted three days VC training for people who drawn from field office, partners and government bureaus in the program area
 - Train community members and groups on various value chains they work in
- SNV participated (and paid for) for 5 SNV programs and for 5 SNV partners. This suffers a serious delay since the SNV-gender expert resigned at the end of 2013.

Agricultural TVET

The WG on A-TVET met on 28 April and decided to focus on:

- Sharing experiences , approaches, materials
- Develop tools
- Joining forces to push ATVET as a worthwhile education
- Focus on career guidance, together and in individual programs.
- Get more members, as there are many organisations who should be part

As part of the career guidance topic a plan was developed with Red een Kind and Woord en Daad in the Netherlands to analyse why youths are not interested in an agricultural career, what hampers them, what obstacles are there and how we can change this into a positive feeling about life as a farmer or in agribusiness. The start up Workshop with the WG on ATVET will be on 16 July.

Rural BDS

The WG on Rural BDS plans a workshop for professionals on RBDS practise, challenges and opportunities. They look for an organisation that could collaborate or contribute like SNV or Forum for Social studies. On June 6 they will meet again.

Cooperative Development

The WG on Cooperative Development met on 19 May and decided to organise a new Cooperative Event as a follow up to the one of 2103. They will also meet with RNE staff to take stock of the progress in the implementation of the Cooperative Strategy

d. Platform for debate and learning

The main element Hub is the learning agenda of the FSRE Fund. In December/ January all winners are visited and the Learning Question will be addressed. Based on the findings a Learning Event was organised from 1-3 April at ILRI, in cooperation with KIT. The program consisted of three components:

- sharing among the projects on the progress made and lessons learned so far;
- a field visit to two agri-businesses (Sologrow and Alem Koudijs) and a dialogue with one agro entrepreneur (Gaddissa Gobena)
- make action plans describing concrete learning activities for the coming months.

Around 30 people participated incl. the leaders of the Working Groups (on the last day). A variety of methods were applied: plenary presentations and plenary discussions, group work and presentations, field visits, assignments and presentations. Before the workshop posters were made with the main features of each project, including highlights of the learning agenda. These posters were introduced by the FSRE coordination team during the opening session and placed at the workshop venue, providing a reference to the participants and visitors.

The report and some observation were submitted to the FSRE Fund management and board. The main conclusions were:

- The projects include a wide and interesting variety of products and services, in different parts of the country. The downside is that it is difficult to compare the projects. Some effective learning tools, such as exchange visits are not possible.
- The field visits provided a good opportunity for the project implementers to get exposed to other realities.
- The challenge is to make the exercise interesting for implementers: it should help them to resolve their problems. For some, this is surely the case, for others less so.

- The learning agenda is not a voluntary affair but integral part of the FSRE Fund; receiving support means a commitment to engage in the learning. Winners are accountable to the outside world on what they learned and sharing their results.
- Three main issues stand out from the projects that need improvement:
 - ✓ more rigorous economic analysis (costs, benefits, margins) of innovations
 - ✓ realistic and professional organizational set-up for new to be established organization (respecting a more business-oriented approach),
 - ✓ making the connection with other entities (particularly private sector actors).
- Some innovation probably cannot be finalized during this relatively short project cycle. The Fund could consider offering additional funding.
- Another option is a facility that could assist with additional research needs. This could be done in cooperation with Dutch students.
- The event enabled peer-to-peer exchange among the FRSE projects. Project staff learned from other projects and it helped them to put their situation into context (such as stage of implementation: delayed, average, ahead).
- Most projects asked for an extension of the project, because of late disbursement of the money from the Fund but also because of the innovative nature of the projects.

A full report of the event, as well as a summary paper with key observations is available on the website <http://apf-ethiopia.ning.com/group/fsre-fund/page/fsre-fund-linking-and-learning-workshop-april-1-3-2014>. The presentations of the winners can also be found there.

On 22-23 May the Hub secretariat joined a second Learning Event of the RNE sponsored agricultural programs. The main conclusion was that people want to learn more about:

- Farm – firm relationships
- Agro-dealers networks
- Setting up functional platforms

As a Hub we proposed to organise an event on the last topic. At a more general level we offered to continue this kind of biannual Learning Events for the Embassy once the central funds from the Netherlands (to hire CDI/MDF) have been phased out.

3. Planning 2014

a. Coordination and Network Development

The following activities have been planned:

- Review the composition of the board. Proposal from secretariat:
 - Phasing out of Cordaid and Terrafina
 - Invite Red een Kind and DFATD (former CIDA from Canada)
- Offer (new) board members a training on 'Effective Networking'
- On-going recruitment of members and profiling of organisations
- Continue timely reporting on events
- A new (global) APF website will be launched with personal pages for all members
- Review the performance and outlook of the Working Groups. Proposal"
 - Access to Finance is inactive and can be stopped
 - Contract Farming and Cooperative Development could be merged into one WG that could be called "Farm-Firms relationships and Cooperatives"

b. Business and partnership brokering

The following activities have been planned:

- Finance Fairs are planned in Debre Zeit (15 -16 July) and in Jimma or Haraghe (Oct.). More attention will be given to inputs (seeds) and agro-technology
- Quarterly drinks on Friday late afternoon with Ethio-Dutch partners on agribusiness development (with ABSF)

c. Innovation communities and Working Groups

Gender coaching

- Experience-sharing event with all participants (August 2014).
- Final workshop (December 2014).
- Facilitate documentation of cases (2015)

A-TVET

- Research by joint Ethio-Dutch team on career for youth in agriculture (July-Aug.)

Cooperative Development

- Experience sharing with the RNE (18 June)
- Cooperative event to take stock of the Cooperative Strategy (Sept.)

Rural BDS

- Professional workshop on RBDS practise, challenges and opportunities (Sept.)

d. Platform for debate and learning

The following activities are planned

- The F&S premises will be extended and a large room will be dedicated to the AgriHub, including space for a library.
- Ask members to submit all relevant documents on Farmers Entrepreneurship and organise this in a depository accessible for all Hub members. Active cooperation is needed from SNV, RNE, CASCAPE, ICCO, etc. Organisations like ILRI, IFPRI, etc. will be contacted for collaboration as well.
- Learning event (sp. focused on RNE partners) on Lessons Learned on the creation and facilitation of Multi Stakeholders Platform
- Co-host the Learning Event with RNE programs (in Oct.) with MDF
- Coach the FSRE winners on how to use the 'Learning Event' to improve their project
- Organise a third Learning Event for the 10 FSRE winners of the first call, and this will be dovetailed with the 15 new winners of the second call for proposals.

Annex: Business linkages

Demanding partner	Organisation	APF action
Aart van de Bos	Soil and More	Link to Solagrow
Geert Wassink	Foundation Harry Teuben	Link to GIZ and Africa Bambo
Desta Heyi	ICCO/ Edukans	Linked to Noordam at RNE
Gerrit Noordam	RNE	Feedback over positie coops
Amanual Assefa	Dept. COP Pricse Consult	Joined forum
Cor Jan Zee	Agriterra	Link to GIZ, AgrInvest, TGT
Alem Greiling	Nutru Dense	Intake and mail
Leen Stok	W&D	Link to Cordaid, ATA via Assigid
Sundial Egypt	Sundial Egypt	Link to Setet, SNV, SBN, Agrit.
Hussen Ahmad	Soil and More	Link to TGT
Mail to all Investors	Many different people	Sending mail
Javi	AGA Agro Industry	Discuss and mail
Teklemariam	Wasasa	Mail to Greiling (ex=SNV)
Abebe Tessama	Private	Link to Dairy Holland
Teshome	Private comp. Bahir Dar	Linked to Durabilis
AGA Group	Private company	Link to Parmalat
Anthony Harris	Private consultant for WB	Link to NL-PLCs and researchers
Tsehaye Zemenfes	CEO of Leti Agri Enterprise	Link to Alema-Koudijs, Maranatha, NABC
Yalew Mengistu	MISGANA GENERAL BUSINESS P.L.C	Link to ICCO Business Incubation
Helen Tedele	GIZ/Consultant	Link to TGT
Gaddissa Gobena	Gaddissa Gobena Commercial Farm	Link to CASCAPE/WUR
David Kamukama	ICCO incubation initiative	Sacramento Farming PLC ECO-Coffee Agriculture & Trading Bale Green Spices and Grain Development
Misrak Aklilu	GATES Foundation	Link to Heineken Breweries